PR
5233
.R57C5

Class PR 5233
Book R57C5

GPO

TURNER'S

DRAMATIC LIBRARY,

With Remarks,

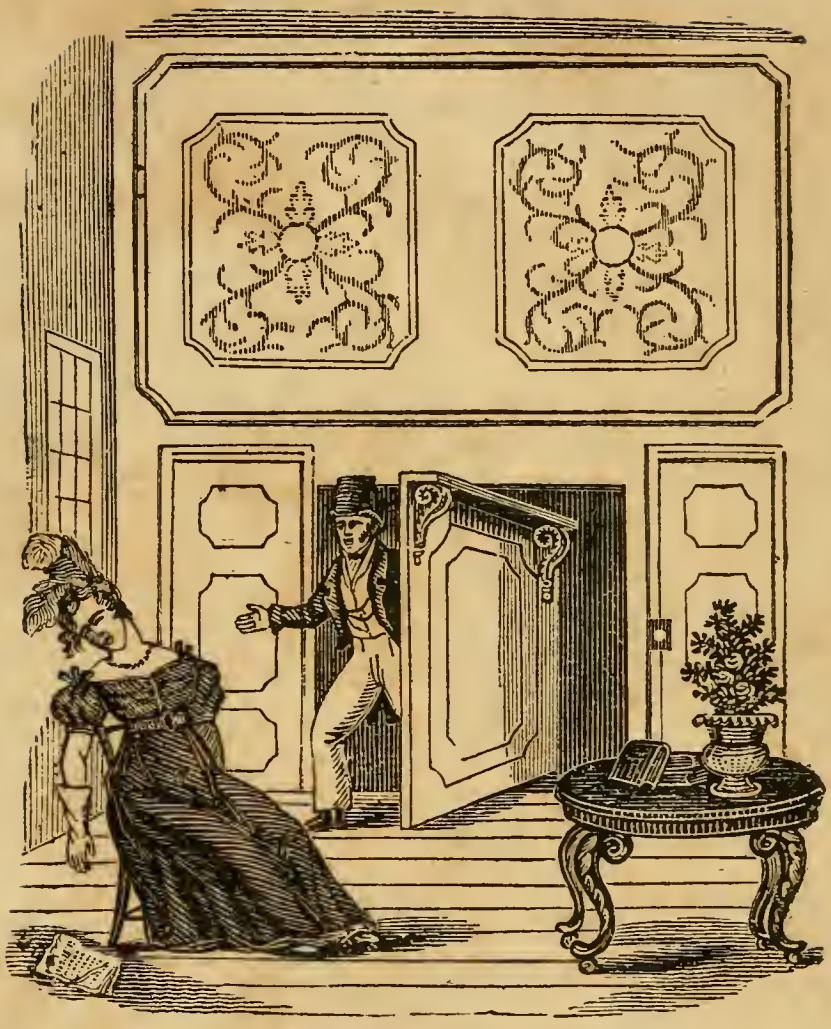
BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,

To which is added the whole of

The Stage Business.

With Spirited Wood Engravings,
Beautifully executed by Mr. Woodside.

PHILADELPHIA:
FREDERICK TURNER, PUBLISHER;
Sold by Turner & Fisher, 11 N. Sixth St.;
Owen Phelan, 57 Chatham St. New York;
B. Barriball, 50 Pratt St., Baltimore;
F. Taylor, Washington City;
B. Baldwin, & Sidney Smith: Mobile, Ala.



The Chimney Piece.

SCENE I.

Fred. (*rushing to her*) Sister, dear sister, take courage: 'tis only I, your brother.

167982

Turner's Dramatic Library.

THE CHIMNEY PIECE;

OR, THE MARRIED MAID:

A LAUGHABLE FARCE.

In One Act.

BY G. HERBERT RODWELL,
Author of Teddy the Tiler; Was I To Blame; I'll Be Your Second; &c., &c.

PRINTED FROM THE BEST ACTING COPY, WITH REMARKS BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL, BY E. T. W.

To which are added

A description of the Costume, Cast of the Characters, Exits and Entrances, and the whole of the Stage Business, Properties, and Directions

AS NOW PERFORMED IN THE

LONDON AND AMERICAN THEATRES.

WITH A FINE SPIRITED ENGRAVING,
By Woodside, from a Drawing taken in the Theatre.

Philadelphia:
FREDERICK TURNER,—PUBLISHER;
SOLD BY TURNER AND FISHER,
11 NORTH SIXTH STREET.

.e1836?a

PR5233
.R57C5

Remarks.

Life is so full of incident and variety that authors can never want for subject if they possess sufficient tact for the undertaking—

> "Thus far of beauty and the pleasing forms
> Which man's untutored fancy, from the scenes
> Imperfect of this everchanging world,
> Creates; and views, enamoured."

Of Dramatic Compositions, those which appertain to the follies and humours of men, if not the most popular and interesting, writers comparatively speaking have succeeded better in; they are certainly the most numerous, the reason of this, if it were worth while explaining, is easily persceptible, and in some measure to be palliated. Taste differs however, and perhaps will never agree; what pleases one, does not, or is it always expected to please another, hence, many of the dramas of the day are not wholly free from praise, however exaggerated; just or *exclusive* censure. There are some, and not a few of what are denominated *successful* pieces, poor and utterly worthless, meagre in point of subject, and barren in true wit and hilarity.

We cannot fully commend the present Farce, or class it with many others that we know of and have witnessed; it however like many that read remarkably dull in the closet, possess considerable interest if properly representad, and this we remember to have seen on more than one occasion.

The story is regularly connected and conducted throughout. The act opens with the view of a chamber, designed and furnished in the 'Olden Style,' and also with large and heavy frame work so common in former days. Mr. Muddlebrain is a student in chymistry and natural magic, a disciple as he is called of Sir Humphrey Davy. Closely applied to study and possessed of an easy and quiet disposition, he naturally pays very little attention to his household concerns, and which leaves him ignorant for a while, of the tricks of those who are taking the advantage of him and the little affairs that happen during his absence of mind. Shuffle, formerly waiter to a gambling house, is the husband of Mary, his wife's ser-

vant, and is living secreted in the house, and on the expense of her master. His wife in the mean time is wrongly supposed to be making love to a young stranger, which is her brother, and who is also secreted in the house by means of the fire place, which turns upon the centre, and furnishes a complete mode of escape from his pursuers, being suspected as having killed a young man in a duel. The old domestic, Horn, throws out some suspicions to his master, of his wife having a lover, and he is determined to watch their motions. During an interview with his wife, Mary, who is ignorant of the plot, tries to attract his attention elsewhere. He leaves them but with the intention of still watching their movements. Mrs. M. is left alone, and after reading a letter she had received, gives the signal as directed; the chimney piece turns upon the centre and brings Frederick into the room. He explains the nature of his case and innocence; Horn is now heard from without, and Frederick places himself against the chimney, touches the spring and disappears —Horn, and Mary enters, and after arranging the table they go out leaving Horn alone—Mrs. Muddlebrain enters cautiously, Horn picks up the letter let fall by Mrs. M.—they exit each taking a light, determined on finding the lover. Shuffle in the interval descends the chimney, but ascends again on hearing Mr. M. who enters, locks the door and exits, and re-enters with a lighted candle, blunderbuss and a pair of pistols. Mrs. M. enters, and he conceals himself, she again gives the signal softly for Frederick—Muddlebrain does it also, but louder; the chimney springs round carrying with it Mr. M., and bringing Frederick into view; Mr. M. is heard without, and enters in great disorder with officers following in pursuit of Melville, Frederick in haste slips under the table; Horn enters; the officers seize Mr. M., as he is in the act of explaining his innocence; some bricks fall upon his head, he runs forward, and Shuffle's legs are discovered dangling down the chimney—the officers seize him. Horn removes the cloth and Frederick is discovered sitting under the table. Frederick laughs, and the officers seize him. Mrs. M. gives a paper to the officers who go off. Muddlebrain asks his wife's forgiveness; which she grants on condition that Frederick marries his niece. He assents, and the story winds up with better prospects of conjugal felicity.

Mary is a spirited character and embodies in it much that can gratify and enhance the attention.

This piece was first produced in this country at the Tremont Theatre, Boston;—and afterwards at the New York, and Baltimore Theatre, to the great delight of the spectators.

The part of Mr. Muddlebrain has been performed by Mr. Burton, an actor of the first stamp and of great merit, alike in this character, as in every other in his line, he is peculiarly happy.

Mr. Hamilton's performance of Frederick, is respectable and praiseworthy; Murdock in Shuffle is excellent.

We must not forget Watson in John Horn, he is exceedingly amusing, and produces considerable applause. This gentleman plays many characters with effect, his Peter Von Bummel, in the Flying Dutchman, and Pietro, in Cinderella are good performances and deserving of notice. We would however recommend him to throw in a little more versatility.

Lucretia could not perhaps have been better played, than by Miss Pelham. She possesses many qualifications for making a good actress, and is at present neither void of talent nor favor.

With such a cast almost any piece of the same nature, would be acceptable, although we have little hesitation in saying that in our humble opinion, there is not that in this Farce which will make it generally successful or often played.

E. T. W.

COSTUME.

Mr. MUDDLEBRAIN.—Dressing gown, white pantaloons green coat
FREDERICK.—Modern fashionable dress.
SHUFFLE.—Frock coat, drab breeches, high top boots.
JOHN HORN.—Grey suit, stockings, &c.
OFFICER.—Modern dress.
LUCRETIA.—White muslin dress.
MARY.—Coloured gown.

PROPERTIES.

Flower Vase—Rasin—Broken Retort—Wash basin—Towel—Soap—Letter—Tray—Cold fowl—Wine—Three candles—Table and cloth.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Chesnut St. 1834.

Mr. Muddlebrain.....Mr. Burton.
Frederick....." Hamilton.
Shuffle....." Murdock.
John Horn....." Watson.
Officer....." Eberle.

Lucretia.....Miss Pelham.
Mary, her servant.....Mrs. Thayer.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; R.D. *Right Door*; L.D. *Left Door*; S.E. *Second Entrance*; U.E. *Upper Entrance*; M.D. *Middle Door*. X. *Crosses*.

RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R. R.C. C. L.C. L.

☞ *The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage facing the Audience.*

THE CHIMNEY PIECE.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber, in the centre of which is a large Chimney Piece in the olden style. A Door on each side of the chimney; two other doors at sides, and a Window with Shutters.*

MARY, SHUFFLE, *and* JOHN HORN, *are discovered arranging the Furniture.*

Mary. (c) Three movings they say are as bad as one fire! If so, since I have lived with him, master has been as good as burnt out of house and home at least half a dozen times. This is the eighteenth house he has had in five years. Move, move, move, he's forever moving! Like—like—

John H. (*Coming forward* RC.) Like your tongue. But remember, mistress Mary, it's not always his fault, for since he's become what he calls a disciple of Sir Humphrey Davy, the great chymist, and a student in natural magic, nobody will allow us to remain half a year in their houses. True, he did blow off the roof of one with his chymistry, and frightened two old maids out of their wigs by raising the devil as they said.

A flash of lightning is seen to issue from door, at side of chimney.

Shuf. (*starting* c.) Yes, and he's doing so now I think. Did you see that?

Mary. Yes—He's trying now to extract butter from sea sand, or some such nonsence. We've only been two days in the house, and it smells of sulphur already as if old Nick had been here for a month.

Enter LUCRETIA, R. *carrying a Flower Vase.*

Lucretia. Here, Mary, place this on the chimney; and tell me where is your master?

Mary. At his natural magic, ma'am.

[*Puts the vase on the side of the chimney.*

Lucretia. Heigho! Poor infatuated man. Thus does he ever neglect me. He has read the works of Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Humphrey Davy, and other learned men, until he almost believes that nothing really exists in the world, but in imagition. (*turns and sees* Snuff.) Mary, who is this young man?

Mary. That's my cousin, ma'am, just stepped in to lend us a helping hand in placing the things.

Lucretia. Your cousin! you've a great many cousins, Mary. This is a brother I suppose to the tall grenadier I found in the pantry last week. Come John Horn, come with me.

[*Exit*, R.

John H. (*following slowly*) I fly, ma'am. [*Exit* R.

Shuf. (c) What the devil did she say about a tall grenadier, and the pantry? Mrs. Shuffle! Mrs. Shuffle!

Mary. (R.C) Hush! Are you mad? Do you want to tell all the world that we're married, and get me turned away?

Shuf. No; but the grenadier!

Mary. Came to see the cook; so to prevent all the fat being in the fire, I cousined him, and made him a relation.

Shuf. Yes; and remember you've cousined me too.

Mary. To be sure! I have; for you know master never will have a married maid; for he says their husbands are always about the house, and that annoys him.

Shuf. But why?

Mary. Because he imagines they live at his expense.

Shuf. Absurd; live at his expence indeed—as for myself I have too much pride—he need'nt be afraid of me. By-the bye, I'll give you the basin I took away the turtle in yesterday. (*takes a basin from his back pocket.*) They're pretty careful I think.

Mary. Never mind, as the place is so good.

Shuf. Yes; but I don't like to be your husband, and not your husband. But why not intrust your mistress?

Mary. I have thought of doing so; (*mysteriously*) I think she'll want my assistance soon, for I've caught her, while my master's at his natural magic, peeping at a handsome young man next door.

Shuf. No!

Mary. Yes!

Shuf. You don't say so?

Mary. But I do though; and if master don't look sharp, he'll find that mistress has more natural magic in her sparkling eyes than he can find in all the musty old books since the

creation. Let him take care, I say, that she doesn't, one of these days, by love's chymistry, transform him into something he won't like to be called.—Here she comes.

Enter LUCRETIA *and* JOHN HORN, R.

Lucretia. Your cousin not gone yet, Mary.

Mary. No ma'am; but he's going (*aside*) into the pantry.

[LUCRETIA *goes to window.*

Shuf. (*to* MARY.) Which is your room?

Mary. That—but why?

Shuf. I shall be here at seven.

Mary. Here? Impossible.

Shuf. Leave that to me; I've a way of getting into this house which—but mum!—up, down, through. I cannot explain to you now—that's my natural magic.

Mary. What do you mean?

Shuf. Hush!

Lucretia. (*looking out of window.*) Still at his window. If I could but let him know.

Mary. (*aside to* SHUF) She's looking at the young man at this moment. I should like to tell master, but he'll hear nothing but —— [*An explosion is heard.*

Lucretia. Gracious powers! What's that?

Mary. Only master blowing himself up again, ma'am.

Enter Mr. MUDDLEBRAIN R. *in a Dressing gown, with a broken Retort in his hand, and his face black on one side.*

Mr. M. How unfortunate, just at the moment I was about to prove to demonstration, in spite of Dr. Thickhead's assertion—

Lucretia. Dear love, are you hurt? Are you in pain?

Mr. M. (*wincing*) Pain! have I not often explained to you, my dear Mrs. Muddlebrain, how completely the philosophers have proved that there is no such thing as pain in the world—its all imaginary. Ask John Horn there, he knows; for last week I broke his head, as an experiment, just to prove that I could not hurt him,

John. H. But you didn't prove it. (*rubbing his head*)

Mr. M. I did John.

John H. Then why would you not let me try the same experiment upon your head, as I wished to do?

Mr. M. Because I was already conviced.

Lucretia. And see there, your poor dear face, such a colour —one side is all black.

Mr. M. There you go again, my dear! You, the wife of a modern philosopher, ought to be aware that there is no such thing as colour in existence. It's an optical illusion. I've often told you, that when the rays of light, as in this instance, (*placing his left hand upon the top of his head, and the thumb of his right hand under his chin, as if to show his face more clearly*) fall upon a dull, thick, heavy, impenetrable substance, it absorbs the light; and there being no light, it's dark.

John H. That's true.

Mr. M. And that's what we call black.

Lucretia. Never mind my dear what we call it, only go and wash it off.

Mary. I'll run and fetch master some water here ma'am.

Lucretia. No, no, it will be better in another room. (*aside*) I must get them out of this apartment.

Mr. M. Mary's right—I'll have it here.

Lucretia. How provoking.

Mr. M. And then I can explain to you the properties of water, by which—

Mary. I'll fetch it directly, sir. Come cousin, I can let you out at the same time.

Shuf. I'll follow, cousin. (*aside to* MARY *as they go out*) Don't forget, at seven this evening. I shall be here, in this room, and I shall not be at all insulted, if I should find a nice cold chicken, and a bottle or two of wine.

[*Exeunt* SHUF. *and* MARY, R.

Lucretia. (*coming forward with Mr. M.c.*) Now, my dear, do go into another room, this you see is not yet arranged—you'll be more at home in your room.

Mr. M. A philosopher is at home any where, I once remember, when Doctor Thickhead and I—

Lucretia. Doctor Blockhead you mean, that's the old fool who first turned your wits about chymistry, and such nonsence! it's he makes you sit up, night after night, studying natural magic, instead of natural affection! and what does all your chymistry come to—nothing.

Mr. M Nothing! Mrs. Muddlebrain? You're insulting! Is it nothing to be able to make goloptious soup from oyster shells? That's done by chymistry. It is nothing to have discovered—O! inestimable discovery!—a method of infusing laughing gas into our Theatres, which will be invaluable on

the first night of a new farce? That's done by chymistry! (*re-enter* MARY *with a basin, towel, soap and water, which she carries to* MUDDLEBRAIN; J. HORN *assists her.*) and could'nt I, by chymistry, with this basin of water and a little fire, make steam enough to blow us all to the devil: and I'll do it, if it will give you any pleasure to see the experiment.

Washes his face, JOHN HORN *holds the basin,* MARY *the towel and soap stand.*

Mary. La, sir! blow us to the naughty gentleman! how you frighten one.

Lucretia. Don't be frightened child, he can't hurt you.

Mr. M. (*washing*) Mrs. Muddlebrain, you're always throwing cold water upon my efforts; Genius, like Fortune, is a slippery jade—the soap, Mary! (MARY *gives the soap and exits* R.) And after enduring all the rubs and scrubs of this life, (*wiping his face*) endeavoring to get through the world with clean hands, I'm at last denied the consolation of a little connubial approbation.

Lucretia. I wish, when you have cleaned your face, my dear, you would go and fetch your niece from school, it will be such a treat for her to attend the party to-morrow evening.

[*Exit* JOHN H. *with basin, &c.* R. *when* MUDDLEBRAIN *has finished washing.*

Mr. M. (LC) No my dear! Ellen never comes from boarding school until the day of her marriage; science has taught me, that girls are composed of very dangerous combustible particles, which, if brought into conjunction with a spark, are apt to go off. When I have signed the marriage contract with my friend Docter Thickhead—

Lucretia. (RC) Ellen marry that stupid old apothecary?

Mr. M. More respect, Mrs. M; Doctor Thickhead is a chymist.

Lucretia. Now I should have thought, nay wished, that my brother Frederick—

Mr. M. Frederick! that impudent young scoundrel, who laughs at my studies, and who is always fighting.

Lucretia. He may be wiser now, for you know we have not seen him for these three years.

Mr. M. Nor will I ever see him again, if the power I have over optics can prevent it; no, no, his last act has settled him with me. What, run away, and to Liverpool too! where Ellen was then at school; and there—

Lucretia. Mr. Muddlebrain you annoy me, I must beg you

will go to your own room. (*sweetly*) Now do my dear Mr. Muddlebrain, do go.

Mr. M. (*aside*) What can be her reason for wishing to get rid of me!

Lucretia. Will you go, dear?

Mr. M. No my love, I want to make a few experiments on prismatic rays of light, as the great Sir Isaac Newton did, through a little hole in the window shutter, (*pointing to window*) and here's just the thing for me.

Goes to it, closes the shutter, in which is a small hole, holds up a prism, or bit of triangular glass.

Lucretia. (*agitated*) If he should discover him! (*loud*) Muddlebrain, I say—

Mr. M. What love? [*still admiring the glass.*]

Lucretia. I'm out of patience with you! you're an ass; and so was Sir Isaac! [*goes off indignantly,* R.

Mr. M. [R] She called Sir Isaac an ass, I'll never forgive that; why did she want to get me out of this room? why call me so sharply from the window? There's some mystery! [*opens shutters, and looks out of window*] I see no one!

Enter JOHN HORN, *cautiously,* R.

John H. (R) Master.

Mr. M. What's the matter?

John H. Are you alone?

Mr. M. Can't you see? [*Comes forward*

John H. Why, to tell the truth, you have so bewildered my poor old head in trying to teach me natural magic, and to prove to me, that nothing is really as it appears to be, that I now scarcely know whether I can see or not; but if I did see what I did see, I shall most certainly open your eyes to what you won't like to see.

Mr. M. What mean you?

John H. The young man, or something that looked to me like a young man, the very same I told you I saw under mistress's window, lives in the very next house.

Mr. M. Well.

John H. And mistress made signs to him from the window above.

Mr. M. Signs! but are you sure, John Horn, that it was not an optical illusion? for if the rays of light—

John H. You know master, I have had some experience in

lovers coming after one's wife; I had enough of it; for when the late Mrs. Horn—

Mr. M. Nonsense, John; it's not because your wife went astray, that all the female part of the creation should do the same.

Enter MARY, R.

Mary. Missus has just found this little strip of paper, sir; she says its a summons for you to attend a Committee at the House of Commons.

Mr. M. I've no time to attend.

Mary. Missus says you had better go directly to—

Mr. M. The devil with you.

Mary. Dear me, sir, don't frighten me; you, being a gentleman, may go where you like, I'm only to go and get the stuffing for to-morrow's dinner. Missus has a goose! [*Exit*, R

Mr. M. Did you notice, how pointedly she said goose
She's in the plot; they want to get me away at any price.

John H. Just as my wife used to send me, when—

Mr. M. John Horn! John Horn! I forbid you ever to mention your wife again—you'll drive me frantic. But I have it—I'll pretend to go out, and when she thinks that all is safe, I'll burst in upon her.

John H. Just as I did, when my wife—

Mr. M. (*loudly*) John Horn! [X *to* R.

John H. I'm dumb, sir.

Mr. M. I wish you had a pleasanter name at this moment. Prettily I shall be laughed at; I—a disciple of Sir Humphrey—a philosopher too! I, who could see into the most hidden secrets of invisible nature—see through a mill stone with half an eye, to be thus blinded by a woman.—But its given me a grand idea, John Horn—I'll invent a chymical test, by which husbands may put their wives' virtue to the proof.

John H. And if husbands are wise, they'll never dare to use it.

Mr. M. Here she comes; the fool that I have been. Look there—it's now as clear as day; there's guilt written on her very countenance.

Enter LUCRETIA, R.

I'll take her off her guard. (*tries to sing*)

Oh the joys of wedded life,
Oh the joys of wedded life.

My joy will choke me. (*sings*)

Quiet mind and pretty wife,
Makes us laugh and sing boys.

Lucretia. You're merry, love. How lucky I should find the summons, for no one knows the trouble it might have cost you, did you not go.

Mr. M. (*aside*) I'm afraid it will cost me more if I do go. (*Sings*) "Quiet mind, &c." (*aloud*) I was not aware my love, that you knew any thing about the affair at all, my dear.

Lucretia. Yes, and you will soon find out that I know a great deal more than you think I do; I shall surprise you soon.

Mr. M. (*aside* R) I expect you will. (*as if nothing had happened*) But I must away. Keep up your spirits duck! I shall not be long.

Lucretia. (RC) No don't, dear.—Good bye.

Mr. M. (R *Aside.*) The hypocritical hyena! (*to* JOHN HORN,) Did you see her smile

Horn. I did—so like the late Mrs. Horn.

Mr. M. (*Stops his mouth—going.*)

Lucretia. (*tenderly.*) What! not a kiss.

Mr. M. I suppose I must. [*he goes reluctantly and kisses her.*

Lucretia. Good bye, darling.— [*retires.*

Mr. M. (*to* JOHN HORN.) You at this door keep an eye on her—watchful—careful—while I go round to the other.

J. Horn. As careful as I used to be of Mrs. Horn.

Mr. M. Damn Mrs. Horn.

[*Exeunt* Mr. M. *and* JOHN HORN, R.

Lucretia. At last I am alone—and may with safety once again read his dear letter. How I tremble—if any one should have seen it—how imprudent: (*reads*) "Dearest Lucretia, at last then I am again near you, dear girl. How fortunate you were to make your husband take this house! We shall now have it in our power to see, to converse freely with each other at all times." (*to herself*) Then it must be like Pyramus and Thisbe, through the wall! (*reads*) "When your husband shall have gone out fly to the breakfast room. (*to herself*) This is it. (*reads*) "Two signals with your hand, and do not be afraid at any sudden apparition!—I shall appear." How I tremble—his apparition! What can he mean?—And yet, in spite of my fear, I would know. Shall I?—I will. (*goes to room door and locks it*) How my heart

beats! [*she slaps her hand twice, part of the chimney piece turns round upon a centre, which brings* FREDERICK *into the room.*

Lucretia. Gracious powers! What have I done?

[*sinks into a chair, the letter falls from her hand.*

Fred. (*rushing to her* R) Sister, dear sister, take courage: 'tis only I, your brother.

Lucretia. Frederick! Oh how you frightened me. (*rising*) Was there ever any thing so wonderful; how did you come?

Fred. A few words will explain every thing:—this house, and the one next to it, on that side, once belonged to a nest of gamblers; that fire place, which turns upon a centre, was one of their modes of escape, when surprised by the officers of justice. Having paid pretty dearly to the scoundrels, for my knowledge of their secrets, I thought I had a right to use them for my own advantage; and my having taken lodgings in the next dwelling, was the reason for my so strongly urging you in my letter, to get your husband to hire this, besides the pleasure of seeing you, dear sister, it will give me a double chance of eluding my pursuers.

Lucretia. Are you then again in trouble?

Fred. I am.

Lucretia. Thoughtless Frederick; and at this moment too; when my husband is on the point of giving the hand of Ellen to another.

Fred. Ellen, the wife of another! Never!

Lucretia. I can scarcely pity you. Why will you ever be quarrelling,—ever be fighting?

Fred. On my honor, dear sister, you wrong me; it is true, I have had some words with the unfortunate young man who was found shot; but how he came so, I am perfectly ignorant. I require time to prove my innocence; and as I thought I could employ that time to more advantage, out of a prison than in one, I fled from Liverpool, arrived safely in London, and of the rest you are already aware. All I now want is a friend, to wait upon the secretary of state, to show him the papers I bear about me, and speak warmly in my favour. Are you sure your husband—

Lucretia. Sure! If he but knew you were here, he would be the first to disclose your retreat, so incensed is he against you. But I have a thought—I—yes; I will do it myself.

Fred. [RC] You, sister!

Lucretia. Yes, I. My friend, Lady Manville, is first cou-

sin to this very secretary of state; I will hasten to her; my husband is out; give me the papers; not a moment must be lost; and remember, do not stir until you hear the signal.

John H. [*without* R] Here, madam!

Lucretia. Some one comes—quick—quick.

Fred. I am gone! [*places himself against the chimney, touches the spring, and disappears. At the same moment,* JOHN HORN *from without, is trying to open* L H D.

John H. Here, madam!

Lucretia. Well? [*unlocks door.*

John H. Didn't you call, ma'am? [*entering.*

Lucretia. No.

John H. Strange! I thought I heard—just a I once did in the time of the late Mrs. Horn.

Lucretia. No more, John.

John H. I'm dumb. But please you ma'am, we are to prepare the dinner in this apartment; the dining-room being so choked up with furniture.

Lucretia. As you please.

Mary. [*from without* R] Mr. Horn, come and assist me with this table.

John H. I'm coming mistress Mary, I'm coming.

(*While* LUCRETIA *is speaking,* JOHN H. *and* MARY *bring in a tray* R, *on which is a cold fowl, a ham, some wine, &c. and three candles unlighted, one a small one, put it on table.*

Lucretia. They certainly suspect nothing! (*looking at her watch*] only five o'clock, and already getting dark. What, if I should not return before my husband. Here, Mary!

Mary. Yes, ma'am. [*coming down.*

Lucretia. I am compelled to go out, Mary; so if Mr. Muddlebrain should come home first, and ask for me, you will tell him that I am dressing. You understand, Mary?—Dressing.

John H. [*aside, placing things on table*] And mind she doesn't get a good dressing. [*Exit* LUCRETIA, R.

Mary. Yes ma'am, I understand. Mum! (*aside*) It's all right, I shall soon be able to tell about Shuffle, and my marriage. [*Exit* R.

John H. There they go, whispering to each other; it's as clear as day! Poor Mr. Muddlebrain!

Mr. M. [*puts his head in at the door*] John.

John H. [*not hearing*] He'll not be long without a—

Mr. M. Horn, I say.

John H. Is that you, Master?

Mr. M. [*Entering* R] Do you know John, I begin to think we are wrong; because it's impossible that my wife—a wife that adores me.

John H. [1] Ah, sir, the late Mrs. Horn adored me! But sir, I have proofs.

Mr. M. Proofs! [*starts.*

John H. Yes, do you know that the young gentleman has not appeared once at the window since you have been out.

Mr. M. Well, but that's a good sign.

John H. Yes; but as I came up stairs I heard the voice of a man. Is that a good sign?

Mr. M. No, a damn'd bad one! A man's voice?

John H. Talking to missus.

Mr. M. I'm in a cold sweat! but John, don't you know that science has taught us, the organ called the ear is very deceptive; that when the mind is fixed intently upon one point, sounds are often heard at another.

John H. But I thought I heard a kiss.

Mr. M. A kiss.

John H. Just such as I once heard in the time of Mrs.—

Mr. M. I'll choke you; and what did you do.

John H. I opened the door—no, I tried to open it; for it was locked!

Mr. M. Locked?

John H. Yes. But she let me in; and madame was—

Mr. M. Well!

John H. Alone.

Mr. M. Fool! ideot! Just as I was in a state of almost spontaneous combustion! Now will you believe in my theory, which proves that every thing is nothing; and that nothing is the only real thing in the world.

John H. [*picking up the note let fall by* Mrs. M.] Then perhaps this little bit of paper is nothing, for it looks wonderfully like a real note.

Mr. M. A note!

John H. Yes, and I declare, addressed to missus.

Mr. M. [*taking the note from* JOHN] To your mistress? What do I see? [*reads*] "Dearest Lucretia," that's my wife! "at last then I am again near you, dear girl." Damnation! [*reading with great agitation*] "Have it in our power at all times—husband out—two signals" [X *to* L.

John H. [LC] Am I a fool now?

Mr. M. No, John, but I am. What shall I do? a fire

damp has exploded in my brain; I'm in a perfect state of confusion. Fetch me a bag of nitrous oxide.

[*walks to and fro, in agitation.*

John H. Yes, sir.

Mr. M. No, some brandy—water—any thing.

John H. Yes, sir.

Mr. M. No, John; fetch me nothing.

John H. I Will, sir.

Mr. M. The perfidious wretch! Light the candles, John. (JOHN *takes an apparatus off the shelf, and lights the candles.*) Now I no longer wonder at her speaking in such praise of this apartment. [*imitates his wife*] "This shall be my apartment; 'twill just do for me." [*naturally*] And will do for me, I'm afraid. [*like his wife*] "Two entrances, how convenient."—No doubt she has found it so. [*looks at note*] "Again near you!" [*to* JOHN] perhaps he's near us; take a light, John, we'll search the house.—Where shall we begin?

John H. I used to begin at the dust hole.

Mr. M. You go that way, I'll take this; and if we find a lover——

John H, I once found two? [*aside.*

Mr. M. Ye powers that guard over injured husbands nerve my arm to vengeance!

[*Exeunt* Mr. M. R JOHN I, *each taking a light.*

SHUFFLE *descends the Chimney, and advances with caution* C.

Shuf. It was not for nothing that I, Harry Shuffle, performed the parts of head waiter, croupier, cutter, shuffler, and all that, when this was a gambling house. To look at that chimney, few people would imagine the inside was built like a staircase—many a time have I scampered up that when the Bow-street officers, those cursed knaves of clubs, were at our heels. I've cut the cards now, and deal in other commodities, I'm head man at a pop shop, as I call it, not a pawnbroker's but a gunsmith's—by-the-bye, I have forgotten to take home this brace of pistols, (*feeling his back pocket*)—never mind. Now let me see: that's Mary's room, and (*turning round sees table*) the dear little queen of hearts! She has not forgotten my hint about the fowl, and the two bottles of wine. Doubtless the family are in the dining room—so I may safely enjoy the banquet my dear little Mary has prepared for me. [*Sits down at the table.*

Re-enter Mr. MUDDLEBRAIN, R, *without the candle*

Mr. M. Nobody to be found; no one has left the house! (*sees* SHUF.) The devil! Here he is, and eating my dinner! Shall I knock him down.

Shuf. How heavy these pistols are in my pocket.

[*puts pistols on table, pointing towards* Mr. M.

Mr. M. Is he going to murder us.

Shuf. What if I'd shot myself!

Mr. M. I wish you had.

Shuf. Now, Mr. Shuffle, I'll cut you for a slice of ham (*cuts a slice, and holds it on a fork.*) It's mine! I've won it. [*eats*

Mr. M. And I've lost it! What's he at!

Shuf. Now, Mr. Shuffle, I'll toss you for a glass of wine—I've won it. [*drinks.*

Mr. M. And I'll toss you out of the window.

Shuf. What's that

[*Puts wine glass on candle, and extinguishes it.*

Enter MARY, R.

Mary ( ) I thought I heard master's voice.

Mr. M. (L U E) A female! that's my wife!

Shuf. (C) There's some one in the room.

Mary. Perhaps it's my husband.

Mr. M. It is indeed.

Mary. Henry!

Shuf. Yes, love!

Mr. M. (*aside*) "Love," too; a pleasant situation mine. (*locks one of the doors.*) Cockatrice! wretch! If I can find my way to the door [X *to* R.,] I'll lock them in until I have procured witnesses; and then for a divorce. [*Exit,* R.

Mary. [L C] I thought master was here.

Shuf. [R C] So he is; your lord and master.

Mary. But how got you here?

Shuf. I flew here; but first my dear little wife, let me give you a kiss as a recompence for the fine fat fowl I've enjoyed.

Mary. What fowl!

Shuf. Why the fowl you left for me on the table here, which I can assure you was delicious.

Mary. Oh! horror! you havn't eaten it?

Shuf. All but the bones.

Mary. We're ruined and undone! Why that was the cold dinner for master and missus.

Shuf. The devil!

Mary. And listen! Here is master coming, what shall I do.

Shuf. Don't be afraid, like an old witch, I'll be up the chimney in a crack.

Mary. I shall faint!

Shuf. That's your affair, I'm off?

[*The door is heard opening.*

Mary. [*Falls in a chair.*] I'm gone!

Shuf. So am I. [*Goes up the chimney.*

Enter Mr. Muddlebrain, *with a brace of Pistols,* R. *and* John Horn, L. *with a Blunderbuss and lighted Candle.*

Mr. M. [R] Now, vile seducer! surrender or we'll shoot you.

John H. (L) This reminds me of old times.

Mr. M. Where is he John?

John H. I don't see any body.

[*Goes to the table and lights the other candle.*

Mr. M. No matter;—here's the companion of his guilt. (*seeing* Mary) Rise, lost, abandoned woman, and leave my house.

Mary. (C) Abandoned! [*Starts up.*

Mr. M. and John H. Mary!

Mary. Yes, and I'll have you to know, I'm no more abandoned than my betters. This is my husband. (*looks around*) Gone!

Mr. M. Who's your husband?

Mary I didn't say husband.

Mr. M. If not; who was it I saw eating my dinner?

Mary. I—as nobody seemed inclined to eat it, I thought I might.

Mr. M. Well, if it were you, you must be very quick at your toilet; for just now I'm certain you had on a pair of breeches and jockey boots.

Mary. I! You know, sir, that as you say, nothing is really in this world as it seems to be, I dare say I did appear to you in jockey boots; but it was merely an hoptical illusion as you philosophers call it.

Mr. M. Where then is my wife?

Mary. Sir?

John H. Can you understand a simple question?—Where is this gentleman's wife? [*Retires towards window.*

Mary. His wife! She's dressing.

Mr. M. Dressing—is she?

John H. Then she's dressing in the street; for by the gas-light yonder, I see her at this moment getting out of a hack-ney coach.

Mr. M. By herself?

John H. No; by the pump.

Mary. May I go, sir?

Mr. M. Yes; to your own room, sphynx, (*takes out key and opens door*) but do not dare to breathe until I call you, or you shall die;

Mary. I shall die if I don't breathe! Indeed, sir; I——

Mr. M. In directly; or——

Mary, Oh dear! What can all this mean?

[MUDDLEBRAIN *pushes her into a room, and locks the door.*

Mr. M. We have one of the accomplices safe; now for the principals. Where can the vile seducer be? Has he vanished in smoke?

John H. Hush, master! I hear missus coming.

Mr. M. Then you descend by the little staircase: call in all my neighbors—every body you see in the street. I wish all London to behold my wrong! To witness my great revenge! My triumph! Quick, away.

John H. I fly. [*Exit,* R.

Mr. M. Now where to hide myself, that I may surprise them. I have it: in the nook of this chimney. Here can I watch the crocodile. Hush! [*Conceals himself.*

Enter LUCRETIA, *cautiously.*

Lucretia. Nobody here! How fortunate I should find my spouse out.

Mr. M. Ditto.

Lucretia. Now then to summon my dear Frederick.

Mr. M. Just now it was Henry.

Lucretia. What a pity it is my husband is so prejudiced; I should like to tell him all about it.

Mr. M. The devil you would!

Lucretia. For if we could all three live together; it would be so pleasant.

Mr. M. Damn'd pleasant! I can't stand this.

Lucretia. Perhaps my husband will be more reconciled in time, and then—

Mr. M. (*Groans.*)

Lucretia. What was that? Was it Frederick? Quick, the signal. (*She slaps her hand rather softly, and listens.*) No reply; he could not have heard me.

Mr. M. But he shall hear me. (*Gives two loud slaps with his hands, when the chimney instantly turns round, carrying with it* Mr. M., *and bringing* Frederick *into view.*) Abduction!

Lucretia. What was that? I shall swoon.

Fred. [*Running to her.*] Do not fear, dear sister.

Lucretia. But I hear some one calling.

Fred. Doubtless; when the chimney was opened, you must have heard the officers trying to break open the door of my apartment.

Lucretia. Officers! have they then discovered your retreat?

Fred. They have; but I'll give them leave to arrest any body they may find in my room. But what news, sister?

Lucretia. Why you must know, I went to my old friend, Lady Manville, when, what was my surprise?—

Mr. M. [*without.*] Reparation! Reparation! What reparation can I have? Answer me that.

Lucretia. Ye powers, my husband!

Fred. Again! I've not time for the chimney.

[*Slips under the table.*

Enter Muddlebrain *in great disorder;* Three Officers *following.*

Lucretia. What does all this mean?

Mr. M. What does it mean? who can tell what it means? Here was I, one moment in this room; and in another, by the force of magic, or old Nick, I've been rammed through a stone wall, into the iron clutches of these civil officers, as they are called.

Enter John Horn, R.

John H. They're below sir; I've brought all I could find, to witness your triumph.

Mr. M. A pretty triumph. (*to the* Officer.) Now, sir, of what am I accused?

Offi. Of killing a young man in a duel.

Mr. M. I fight a duel!

Offi. Yes; they tell me it was a most bloody contest, and but for your wonderful bravery ————

Lucretia. Indeed, sir, he is not capable of such a thing.

John H. No indeed he's not, sir.

Mr. M. No sir. I'm incapable of any thing; I'm a gentleman, sir. This is my house.

Offi. Then why did we find you in the next one? How got you there?

Mr. M. Through the wall.

Offi. Ridiculous! Your name is Frederick Melville; we know you.

Mr. M. No, sir. My name, I'm not ashamed of it, is Muddlebrain—Joseph Muddlebrain.

Offi. The devil it is! Then if you are a quiet gentleman, why do we find you armed with these crackers?

[*Taking pistols from table.*

Mr. M. Because I have been watching and searching for a lover my wife has hid somewhere.

All. A lover!

Lucretia. Mr. Muddlebrain, do you dare to——

Mr. M. Yes, ma'am; I here unmask you to the world.

Lucretia. Listen to me, sir.

Mr. M. I'll hear nothing! [*To the* Officer] I was standing just here, [*goes to chimney*] upon the watch, when all at once———

Shuf. [*In the chimney*] I'm down by jingo.

[*Two or three bricks fall down upon* Mr. M., *who runs forward*

Mr. M. Murder! [Shuffle's *legs are dangling down for a minute; and all are astonished.*] That's he! I know him by his boots. That's her paramour. He first broke my peace, and has now broken my head. Seize him!

[*Servants seize* Shuffle, *and bring him forward.*

Shuf. Pardon, gentleman, I'm no paramour, but an honest young man.

Offi. How came you in that chimney?

Shuf. Why, as I was going along, I heard the cry of fire; so thinking it was in the chimney—I—I—I—fell down it; and here I am.

Mr. M. So villain, you were walking along the street, and fell down a chimney. A pretty story, indeed.

Mary. [*Heard knocking from within*] Let me out, let me out! [John H. *unlocks the door,* Mary *enters.*

Offi. [*To his men*] March him off.

Mary. [*orging.*] Oh ma'am! oh master! Pray pardon! Do, good Mr. Officer! he only came to see me; he's an honest young man and my husband.

All. Your husband!

Mr. M. What do I hear? say it once more.

Mary. He's my husband.

Mr. M. Come to my arms, you little darling. (*embraces her*) Oh! my good friends! oh! my dear little wife! and you, John Horn, I don't mind your name now, bear witness, that I'm the happiest man,—that is, married man in the world.

John H. (*who has been looking at the table.*) Not yet, sir.

Mr. M. What do you mean, Horn?

John H. (*Aside to* MUDDLEBRAIN, *and pointing at the table.*) Here's another, I see his legs.

Mr M. Nonsense; they are the legs of the table.

John H. If they are, they wear boots. (*At this moment,* MARY *and* SHUFFLE, *who have been taking away the dinner things, also take away the cloth, and discover* FREDERICK *sitting under the table.*)

Fred. (*laughing*) Don't be afraid! 'tis only I.

All. A young man!

Lucretia. Brother!

Mr. M. Frederick Melville!

Offi. The very man we are to arrest.

Lucretia. This paper will satisfy you that he is at liberty.

[*Gives paper to* OFFICER, *who goes off with his followers.*

Fred. Is it possible!

Mr. M. John Horn! John Horn! You've made me an ass. (*To his Wife.*) Most celestial of terrestial beings, can you forgive me?

Lucretia. On one condition.

Mr. M. Name it.

Lucretia. That Frederick marry your niece Ellen.

Mr. M. Well, as he deserves to be punished in some way, perhaps that will be as good a method as any.—Eh! John Horn?

John H. Can't be better—I've been married.

Mr. M. And you've been an old fool, I hope you'll allow that.

John H. I don't know. (*confidentially.*) There may be a third lover somewhere, as there was in the time of the late Mrs. Horn.

Mr. M. Poh! Let there be, I fear him not. (*Taking* LUCRETIA's *hand.*) And I hope the structure of our chimney piece, supported by Mr. and Mrs. Muddlebrain, with a little Cupid at top, will be considered both useful (*Pointing to* LUCRETIA) and ornamental.

THE END.

TURNER & FISHER

Return their sincere acknowledgements, for the patronage so liberally bestowed upon them since their opening, and hope by strict attention and polite deportment to merit and receive a continuance of public favour.

NEW PLAYS.

Just received, via. the latest arrivals, upwards of

200

New pieces, by the best authors; many of which have not yet been acted in this country; and cannot be obtained at any other establishment in this city.

A complete set of

Cumberland's British Theatre:

a scarce and valuable production, for sale on reasonable terms.

Mathews' Trip to America,

with Eight Original Comic songs

Always on hand, the largest assortment, and best editions of Plays, to be had in the United States.

PRINTING OFFICE.

FREDERICK TURNER acquaints his Friends and the Public in general, than he has opened an extensive

General and Fancy Job

PRINTING OFFICE,

No. 367 MARKET STREET,

where he is now prepared to execute the above business in all its various styles and branches, as cheap and not inferior to any other establishment in the city.

Orders received at 11 North Sixth Street.

☞ A share of public patronage is respectfully solicited. ☜

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2009

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN COLLECTIONS PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

0 014 529 059 4